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Part II
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USIA 41019

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SUBJECT: FY 89 GCP FOR AFGHANISTAN TO U.S. POLITICAL

- PROCESSED AND INSTITUTIONS: FINAL EVALUATION

1. SUMMARY: AN EVALUATION SESSION FOR THE SUBJECT GCP WAS HELD IN WASHINGTON ON JUNE 16. THE SEVEN PARTICIPANTS COMMENTED POSITIVELY ON BOTH THE SUBSTANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR PROGRAM. THEY CITED INCIDENTS INTO ETHNIC AND RACIAL RELATIONS IN THE U.S., POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITIES, MINORITY RIGHTS, AND THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AS AMONG THE SUBSTANTIVE HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR PROGRAM. THEY WERE ALSO PLEASED TO LEARN OF CONTINUED SUPPORT AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE CAUSE OF A FREE AFGHANISTAN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GROUP FELT THAT THE INITIAL WEEK IN WASHINGTON PROVIDED THEM WITH A GOOD FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO UNDERTAKE THEIR EXPLORATION OF AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS DURING THEIR TRAVELS AROUND THE U.S. A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH ADVOCATES REPRESENTING HISPANIC, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, NATIVE AMERICAN, AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS' AGENDAS IMPRESSED THE GROUP WITH THE BREADTH OF PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE U.S., AND THE WIDE VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS WHICH THIS SYSTEM ACCOMMODATES. THE VISIT TO CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA AFTER WASHINGTON INCLUDED A SESSION, WITH HOME HOSPITALITY, WITH PROF. A.E. DICK HOWARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, ONE OF THE MOST RENOWNED CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARS IN THE U.S. NEXT, IN ATLANTA, THE GROUP EXPLORED ELECTION LAWS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND IN SUBSEQUENT STOPS IN NEBRASKA AND CALIFORNIA HAD IN-DEPTH EXPOSURE TO STATE LEGISLATIVE SYSTEMS. MEETINGS WITH AFGHAN ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK AND INTERACTION WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS IN WASHINGTON (INCLUDING ATTENDANCE AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON U.S. POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN) COMPLETED THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES.

3. THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THE GROUP'S EXPERIENCES WAS BOTH POSITIVE AND ENLIGHTENING. THEY COMMENTED THAT EXPOSURE TO THE U.S. APPROACH TOWARDS ASSURING MINORITY ACCESS TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM WILL BE OF VALUE TO THEM IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE IN A FREE AFGHANISTAN. PARTICIPANTS WERE SURPRISED AT LOW VOTER TURNOUT IN ELECTIONS IN THE U.S., AND THE LACK OF PARTY-LINE VOTING BY MOST VOTERS. THEY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT THAT THE "WILL AND WISHES OF THE PEOPLE" MUST BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS CONTINGENT UPON THE RECOGNITION OF PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND THEIR READINESS TO MAKE SUCH A SYSTEM WORK.

4. THE GROUP EXPRESSED SOME DISAPPOINTMENT CONCERNING THE LIMITED TIME AVAILABLE TO THEM (FOUR WEEKS WAS CONSIDERED INSUFFICIENT FOR THE AMBITIOUS GOALS WHICH THEY HAD), THE LACK OF IN-DEPTH INTERACTION WITH "AVERAGE" AMERICANS, AND IN SOME CASES ACCOMMODATIONS AT WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS CONSIDERED TO BE UNNECESSARILY "DELUXE," NON-CENTRALLY-LOCATED HOTELS. THE PARTICIPANTS HAD ARRIVED EAGER TO INFORM AMERICANS ABOUT

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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, AND WHILE SOME OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SO AROSE IN THE PROGRAM, THESE WERE NOT SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY THE GROUP. THIS DISAPPOINTMENT TO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP REFLECTS WHAT IS PROBABLY AN INEVITABLE "TENSION" BETWEEN THE AGENDA OF IV PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS (WHO OFTEN ARE EAGER TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO AMERICAN AUDIENCES) AND THE AGENDA OF THE POST AND E/V, WHICH IS TO HAVE THE PARTICIPANTS GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT AND FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF THE U.S. CONCERNING THE COST AND LOCATION OF HOTELS. THESE ARE OFTEN SELECTED TO ASSURE SAFE AND SECURE ACCOMMODATIONS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. THIS SOMETIMES REQUIRES THE CHOICE OF NON-CENTRAL, RELATIVELY HIGH-COST HOTELS, A FACT WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS PROBABLY COULD NOT FULLY APPRECIATE.

5. IN SPITE OF SOME INITIAL RESERVATIONS, THE GROUP WAS PLEASED WITH THE INCLUSION OF HOME HOSPITALITY IN THE PROGRAM. MOREOVER, THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE HAD MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH THE AFGHAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

6. E/VGN WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE CALIBER AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS PROJECT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONDUCTING ADDITIONAL PROJECTS ON THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC IN THE FUTURE. THE PROJECT WAS THE SUBJECT OF A WIRELESS FILE ITEM (WESA 502) ON JUNE 16. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE INTERVIEWED DURING THEIR VISIT TO NEBRASKA BY THE "OMAHA WORLD HERALD". A COPY OF THIS INTERVIEW, WHICH APPEARED ON JUNE 11, IS BEING FORWARDED TO POST. WE ARE ALSO FORWARDING TO THE POST CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION FOR PRESENTATION TO THE PARTICIPANTS. REGARDS. (E/VGN)

GELB

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